

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



**Historic Preservation Review Board
Consideration of McMillan Redevelopment**

Vision McMillan Partners (VMP) have submitted a draft master plan for review and comment by the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). The HPRB will consider the master plan in an open public meeting on Thursday, May 24th at 441 4th Street, NW, Room 220-South (Judiciary Square Metro).

The scheduled time for the Board's consideration has not been finalized, but will likely be in the afternoon on the 24th. The agenda for the meeting, including the time the project will be called, will be posted on the Historic Preservation Office (HPO) website on May 18th (www.preservation.dc.gov).

What is the role of the HPRB?

The HPRB is a nine-member panel of architects, preservation specialists, and citizens appointed by the Mayor to advise him on the consistency of proposed plans with the city's preservation law and public policies that encourage the retention, reuse and adaptation of historic properties.

While the HPRB is aware that there are many important considerations in the ultimate evaluation of a project, the Board can only consider historic preservation issues – whether a project retains important features and characteristics of a property, whether alterations are compatible, and whether a project adapts a property for current use in a manner that preserves and enhances its character.

The HPRB cannot consider and does not have expertise in economic issues, traffic impacts, or proposed uses. These broader land use issues and impacts will be evaluated in a separate public process when this project is filed for consideration by the Zoning Commission.

What will happen at the HPRB meeting?

The meeting on May 24th is the first consideration of the McMillan master plan by the HPRB. The Board will allot approximately 45 minutes for the VMP team to present the plan, and the HPO staff will briefly present a report that summarizes the preservation and planning issues that the Board should consider in its deliberations.

Following these presentations, the Board will provide an opportunity for public testimony by affected ANCs, community organizations, and any interested individuals. Given the high level of public interest in the project, it is likely that the HPRB will not conclude the process of hearing public testimony at the May 24th meeting, and will have to continue the meeting to the next scheduled HPRB meeting on Thursday, June 28th.

The HPRB will not be considering the specific designs of the individual construction projects (the EYA townhouses, the Jair Lynch multi-unit residential buildings, or the Trammell Crow office buildings) on May 24th. Those individual projects have not yet been filed for HPRB review, and will be considered at a future HPRB meeting. The HPRB will only be considering and hearing testimony regarding the master plan on May 24th.

How can I participate?

The preservation review process encourages public participation and comment on projects that may impact historic property or the surrounding neighborhood. Following the applicants' presentation, the Board will ask for testimony from the affected ANC or any government agencies, organizations or individuals in support, and organizations or individuals in opposition. The HPRB is extremely interested in hearing the views of the public and recognizes that they are essential to informed decision-making.

The HPRB meeting is not a contested case proceeding. Those interested in testifying are not required to sign up in advance, and there is no cross examination or "party status." The meeting is open to anyone interested in voicing their opinion. However, the HPRB will ask that those testifying be concise and to limit their comments to relevant historic preservation considerations. Repetitive testimony is discouraged, and individuals are welcome to merely put their name on the record and associate themselves with views that have already been expressed. Testimony will be limited to five minutes for organizations and three minutes for individuals.

Written testimony received electronically by the Historic Preservation Office by 12:00 noon on Wednesday, May 23rd will be forwarded to the HPRB members in advance of the meeting. Written testimony can also be presented at the meeting to the Board; 12 copies should be provided. If you provide written testimony in advance and also intend to testify in person, the Board will ask that you summarize your testimony, as they will have already read it. All correspondence should be addressed to the Chairman, Historic Preservation Review Board, Historic Preservation Office, 1100 4th Street, S.W., Room 650, Washington, DC 20024 or sent c/o Steve Callcott at steve.callcott@dc.gov.

What happens after the HPRB meeting?

In considering master plans, the HPRB serves in an advisory capacity. It does not officially "approve" or "deny" master plans, but merely comments on whether it believes an appropriate balance has been struck with regard to the preservation and reuse of a site. Since this project will involve substantial alteration and demolition of the site, the Board's comments are advisory to the Mayor's Agent for Historic Preservation, an administrative judge who will hold a separate hearing to weigh the proposed demolition against other benefits that the project may accrue to the city.

The Mayor's Agent hearing will be scheduled only after the HPRB has concluded its review of the master plan and the individual projects. The Mayor's Agent hearing will be advertised at least 30 days in advance, and is open to public participation and testimony, however, the full transcript of the HPRB meetings will be provided as part of the record to the Mayor's Agent. It is currently anticipated that the Mayor's Agent hearing for the McMillan project will be held in the Fall of 2012.

What if I have additional questions?

The HPO website has further information on the role and members of the HPRB, as well as the historic preservation law and regulations – www.preservation.dc.gov. Steve Callcott is the assigned HPO staff person for the McMillan project, and can be reached at steve.callcott@dc.gov or 741-5247.